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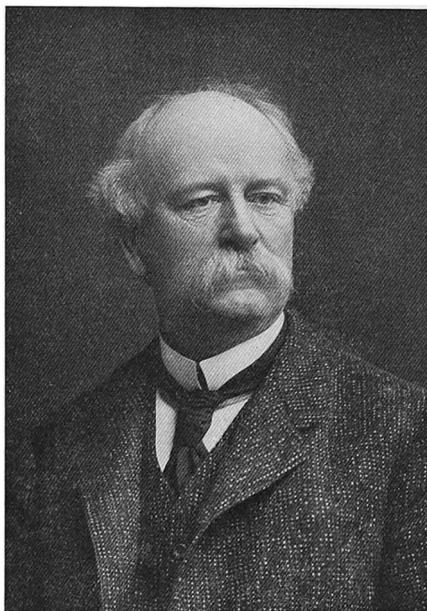
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GEORGE WILLIAM WHITAKER, PAINTER

That is a very narrow definition of poetry as denoting merely "the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmic language"—as in the stanzas of Keats or Shelley. By what other word shall we describe the sublime tragedy of Salvini, the sculpture of Phidias, the music of De Liebes—above all, the paintings of Raphael, Turner, Corot? Should we not rather accept the more concise yet liberal definition laid down by the immortal Poe: "Poetry is the rhythmic creation of beauty"—not only of language, but of color, motion, music, marble, any expression of emotion which thrills the soul of man in his highest moods. The undying instinct that craves the beautiful seeks aspiration through the accidental medium of environment and inheritance. The poetry of painting is not realism and impressionism, but fancy, passion, the higher color harmonies, which constitute the soul and very essence of art.

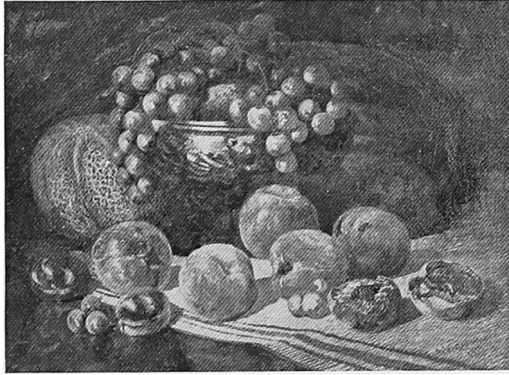
In the paintings of George William Whitaker we find that unmistakable quality—which no outward process can create—revealing the true-born poet. He is essentially imaginative, painting not merely with eyes half-shut against the cold realities of external nature, but also dipping his brush in ideal fancy. In idyllic landscapes his poetic impulse seeks expression. Although he paints the woods and fields in various moods, it is at the season when "heaven tries the earth if it be in tune, and over her gently a warm ear lays," that his genius is most mature. The season gives inspiration.

A typical Whitaker depicts a stretch of meadow-land, just by the



GEORGE WILLIAM WHITAKER
From a Photograph

gates of the forest; with a roadway winding over a hill, down which—just far enough off to be purely poetic and give a Virgilian touch—a shepherd drives his flocks; over all heavy, white cloud-curtains—the fleecy cumulus—and somewhere in the middle-distance an oak—always a twisted, gray-barked, druidical oak—just as Corot is incomplete without a willow. Such a drowsy summer scene will not remind you exactly of any bit of country you have ever known, but such an elusive, tantalizing, unattainable spot as your inward soul is longing and hoping for and expecting, as though some sprightly Ariel of the



FRUIT PIECE

By George William Whitaker

fields had whispered to the artist the secrets of some ultimate Arcadia.

Mr. Whitaker has a theory that a landscape should be constructed as a sentence, with noun, adjectives, and verb, the noun being the backbone, the dominant object which gives the name to the picture; the adjective supplying the accessories and detail of the foreground;

while the verb, denoting the action of the picture, is found in the cloud effect. This theory is fanciful, but has its plausibility.

Although primarily a landscapist, by his fruit you will know him also. In these decorative compositions he makes little effort to "compete with life," but invests his subject in a wealth of poetry, almost mysticism at times; not the mythical cherries to be pecked at by wax wings. He obtains his subtleties by choosing lines of composition to give rhythm and sweeping curves, employing violets, olives, ambers, and golden tones, suggesting an epicurean voluptuousness.

Mr. Whitaker's artistic career is identified with Providence, Rhode Island, which he adopted as his home in the early seventies. At that time Sarah Helen Whitman, the poetess—and inamorata of Edgar Allan Poe in his final tragic days—said of Mr. Whitaker, who was one of her drawing-room coterie gathering on Sunday evenings to discuss the world of art and letters:

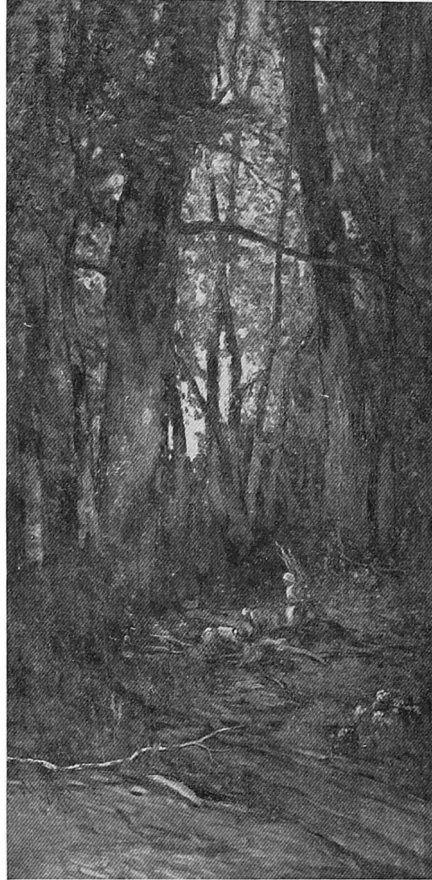
"His genius is unusually fertile and inventive, with a prevailing tendency to works of an imaginative and ideal character. He is fond of gorgeous Turneresque effects of color. It is interesting to see the

familiar objects of our own city transfigured and illuminated by the glamour and prestige of art." A pretty and well-merited tribute.

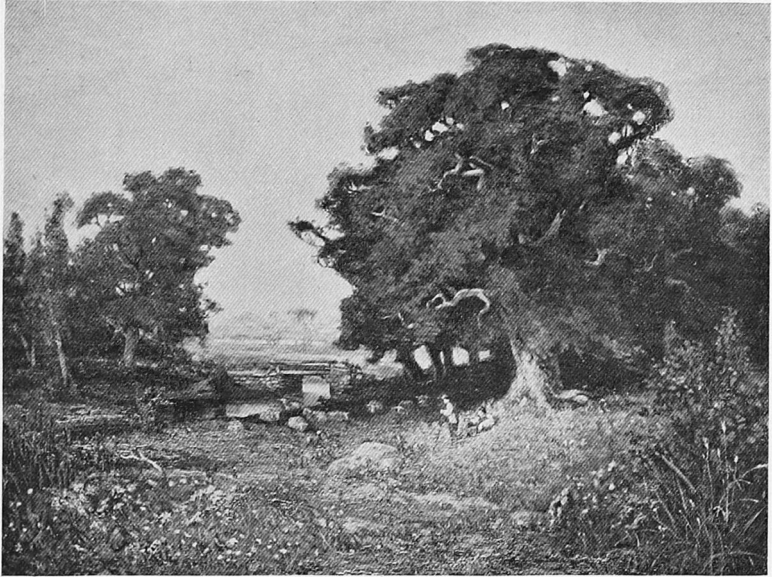
Among his works of this period one which compelled consideration was, not unlike a dark-some tale of Poe, entitled, "The Horrors of the Middle Passage." "That fatal than perfidious bark, built i' the eclipse and rigged with curses dark," sails out into a midnight sea on the top of a wave, which assumes a phantom form, with flowing locks and grasping hands. Such a minor theme is a stray note in the symphony of his passions, for he commonly sings in optimistic key of youth and love, and a sunny sky. Other large canvases of note are "London, Looking up the Thames," "The Crown of Venice," and "The Four Seasons." But mostly his canvases are small and well contained, for conciseness is the first essential of poetry.

In early youth it was his portion to dwell at the far-famed Phalanx at Red Bank, New Jersey, a transcendental community, where he was inspired with the ideal purpose which has guided him through maturer years. There his first instruction in painting came at the hands of Professor Guilledeau. In 1860 he made his first ambitious oil-sketch, about the size of an envelope; painfully minute and literal, "rather a leaf of unfoldment," says the artist, "than a bud of promise."

Honor came to him in 1864, when a water-color of a tumble-down mill was hung on the line at the National Academy of Design. Later



FAGOT GATHERERS AT FONTAINEBLEAU
By George William Whitaker



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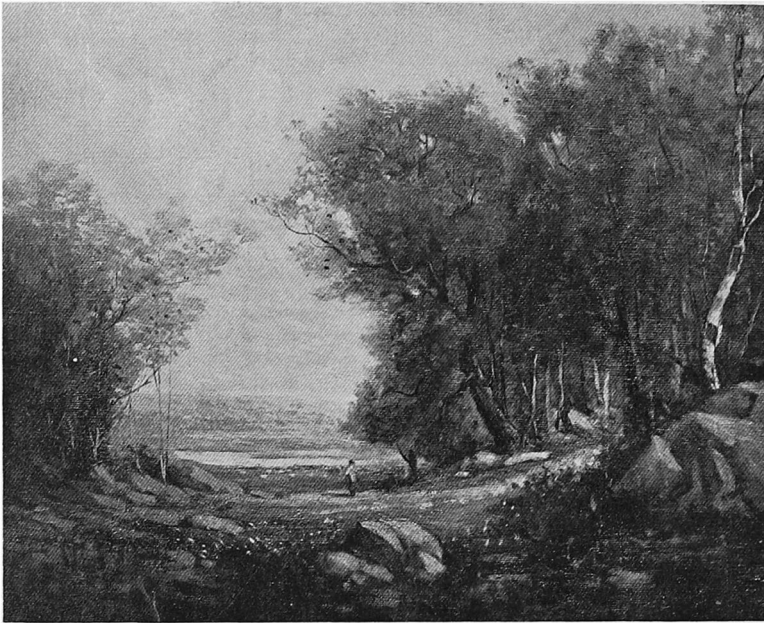
By George William Whitaker

he visited Paris, spending much of his time painting wood interiors at Fontainebleau. In Paris Mr. Whitaker found congenial affiliation with George Innes, for they were of the same craft and temperament, and like several other noted artists, attended the Swenborgian Church. His interest in his profession led Mr. Whitaker, in conjunction with the late E. M. Baumeister, to start the Providence Art Club, of which he is now spoken of as "father." Later he organized a club of professional men for analytical purposes, called the A. E. Society.

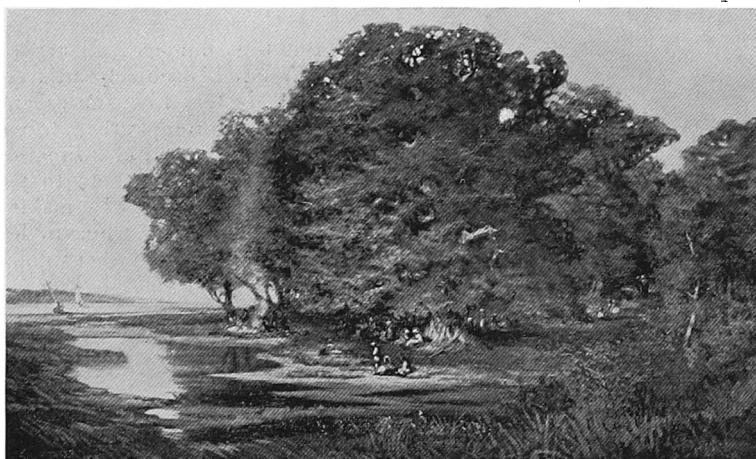
Mr. Whitaker is enjoying life at his home in the environs of Providence, where he lives in an atmosphere of art and music. Occasionally he consents to give a lecture, always well attended and thoroughly appreciated. A few of these literary brush-works may paint the man better than another's pen. "There is a time running through all art, beginning with the Deity and ultimating in the smallest atom." "Like the wise of all ages he (the artist) uses nature to interpret himself. The crude things of nature are passed through the imagination, which refines, molds, and develops what the hand can intelligently place before the world." "The top-root of all art finds its nourishment in sensibility." "It is not too much to suppose that thought and feeling can lie in a concealed state and that, unex-

pectedly aroused, may produce a picture of great strength and mildness or of serenity and holy peace. But the source of all artistic power lies in the ability of the artist to fathom his subject and from his fullness he paints with best effect." "Masters like Inness and La Farge are filled with a warmth of feeling that prompts them to use unctuous color, buoyed up by spiral lines and beautiful swimming atmospheres." "If the mission of an artist is to contribute to the advancement of his fellow-men, if he informs our minds by making us acquainted with objects and facts, if he tells us about human life and manners and enlarges our store of information and awakens noble feelings, he is doing a great work."

RALPH DAVOL.



THE GATE OF THE WOODS
By George William Whitaker



RHODE ISLAND CLAM LAKE
By George William Whitaker

GLEANINGS FROM AMERICAN ART CENTERS

The New York Architectural League has been holding an exhibition, which according to report, is the best yet. And that is saying much, for these displays of the allied arts have for years been, beyond peradventure, the best thing in the New York art season. Among other strong attractions this year are E. H. Blashfield's charcoal drawings for the ceiling of a music-room for Mr. Lewisohn and a photograph of his decoration for the new court-house in Baltimore; a decorative panel by F. Luis Mora, son of the sculptor, who executed the decorations on the façade of the Congregational House in Boston; the sketch for Robert Reid's "James Otis" decoration in the Massachusetts State House; a dining-room panel by Robert V. V. Sewell; a composition, "Education," for mural decoration of a delivery-room of a public library, by George W. Breck, who until recently held the Lazarus scholarship at Rome; and a model of one of the premiated competitive designs for the Grant monument in Washington, that by Charles A. Lopez and F. G. R. Roth. There are also some highly commended designs from the New York department of bridges, from which it is evident the new West Boston bridge will not be in a class by itself. The Manhattan, Williamsburg, Blackwell's Island, and Pelham Bay bridges are all declared to be "great sweeps of iron, graceful in shape, and expressive of splendid strength."

✱ At Washington the local architectural club has been holding an exhibition at the Corcoran, including a large sending from the